

GENERAL NEWS

The Russo-Japanese War.

There were no notable engagements in the Far East last week. The Russians lost several hundred men by freezing, one or two Russian ships were torpedoed, the Japanese fleet was strengthened, and the extent of the Japanese victory became generally appreciated by the rest of the world.

The London Morning Post declares that Japan's action already in a fortnight has altered the political conditions of the world. It must compel several of the great powers to reconsider, and perhaps revise their policies, and may result in a rearrangement of international groups. The great change consists in pricking the Russian bubble. The superstition that possessed the people regarding Russia has been dissipated.

A LIBERAL MOVE BY THE CZAR.

A notable dispatch from St. Petersburg, 19th, is as follows: "The Russian government today abolished the censorship upon all news and other telegrams. The lifting of the embargo, which has existed for generations on the free transmission of news from the Russian Empire, came as a direct result of consideration of the subject by the Czar himself, and in some respects this abolition is regarded here as the most important act since the emancipation of the serfs."

AN AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC TRIUMPH.

America has won another diplomatic victory in the general acceptance of Secretary Hay's note to the Powers requesting that the neutrality and independence of China be respected. The note follows:

"You will express to the Minister of Foreign Affairs the earnest desire of the Government of the United States that in the course of the military operations which have begun between Russia and Japan the neutrality of China, and in all practicable ways her administrative entity, shall be respected by both parties, and that the area of hostilities shall be localized and limited as much as possible, so that undue excitement and disturbance of the Chinese people may be prevented, and the least possible loss to the commerce and peaceful enterprise of the world may be occasioned."

Japan accepts this unreservedly. Russia's reply is of a character generally favorable to Mr. Hay's suggestions. A reservation that Manchuria shall not be regarded as excluded from the field of hostilities or embraced within the administrative entity of China was to be expected.

EFFECT ON AMERICAN FOOD PRICES

Hostilities in the Far East, writes the Washington Correspondent of The Progressive, are almost certain to have a decided effect on the market price of the products of the American farm provided the war lasts any length of time. As is always the case, there will be an increased demand for all food-stuffs, especially wheat and corn, and the prices that will rule are certain to be of such a figure as to insure a handsome profit to the farmer. In the broker's offices in Chicago and New York the tip has long since gone out to buy May wheat or, for that matter, any other of the great staple food products. The American trade will be mostly with Japan, as that country is practically dependent upon the United States for its flour and other standard eatables. Russia, on the other hand, will probably be able to feed itself as it usually produces a surplus every year. Both nations will make heavy drafts on our supply of the great and only "Missouri mule," and the fortunate owners thereof see a season of great prosperity at hand.

THE PORT ARTHUR VICTORY.

The Literary Digest in its issue of February 20th, gives this estimate of the Japanese victory at Port Arthur:

"By a midnight dash of torpedo-boats on the night of February 8th and two naval battles three hundred miles apart at noon next day the Japanese have won a decisive superiority over the Russian fleet, secured their country against invasion, rendered safe the transport of their troops, prevented the junction of the Russian naval forces, and reduced the land forces to depend on the single-track railroad to St. Petersburg for supplies and reinforcements. Such, in summary, is the view taken by our newspapers. Japan's naval forces are now considered about twice as strong as Russia's in Far Eastern waters, with the Russian ships divided into three squadrons, one at Port Arthur, one in the northern part of the Japan Sea, near Vladivostock, and one on its way up the Chinese coast. Three of the four cruisers of the Vladivostock squadron, which have been harassing the coasts of northern Japan, are reported to have been blown up and sunk. Frequent reports of the cutting of the Russian railroad in Manchuria, by blowing up bridges, etc., are also heard."

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

Eight transports with Japanese troops are on the way to Korea; 60,000 troops are concentrated on the coast of Korea.

Japan will refuse contributions offered in her aid from the United States; no foreigners will be allowed in the army or navy.

People at Port Arthur are panic stricken and leaving the town.

It is believed that the Russian commander in the Far East is concentrating his forces at Harbin.

There is great activity in European countries in preparation for any war emergency.

Sixty British battleships are being equipped with new steel guns.

Before twelve days shall have elapsed the Russians will have disposed of an army of 400,000 men through Manchuria.

OUR NEW YORK LETTER.

Matters of Interest Reported by The Progressive Farmer's Special Correspondent.

Editors Progressive Farmer:

Erastus Wiman was a man who came here from Canada years ago and by his shrewdness and ability came to be a partner in the great firm of R. G. Dun & Co., of whom every business man at every cross-roads in the nation has heard. At one time Wiman enjoyed an income of \$80,000 to \$90,000 a year. He lived in good style in Staten Island—a few minutes from the city—and so great were his projects that he was known as the King of Staten Island. He planned with President Garrett of the B. & O. R. R. to make a great terminus of that road on the Island and with its city connections the whole island was to become one of the most important spots in the world. Everything went well till Garrett collapsed and lost his mind. Then Wiman undertook to go ahead alone and in his eagerness he did some supposedly crooked work in the signing of checks of the Dun firm. The matter got into the courts, the big projects began to become shadowy and Wiman lost. At 70 he was a hopeless paralytic whose mind was shattered. His beautiful house and its furnishings were disposed of and last week he was carried to his grave by a few faithful friends and his name is almost utterly forgotten. How full of tragedies the world is. In a big city one somehow becomes hardened and only the personal griefs seem to affect us.

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The man who has been longing for many seasons for a winter "like his mother used to make" has had his fill this time. Of course, six degrees below zero is not forty and fifty as it was in the upper part of the State; but when we have actual zero here the cold makes one feel just as "chilly"

as he would up-State. The air is damp and the cold simply goes right to the marrow. We let the water run all night but it would freeze even then and your usually sweet temper is not at all mollified to hear the plaster dropping in small hours, as it is loosened by the water from the bursted pipes. The cold has been so intense that trees have in many cases split. This seems to apply more generally to harder sorts of wood. They are not, of course, affected by any decent winter, but when it gets twenty below, the sap freezes and with inevitable expansion the tree is split from heart to bank. We have reports telling of many peach trees killed, and others which tell that deep snow has saved them. We shall know a little later on.

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The cold has also been a factor in keeping prices of provisions and farm products generally well up. I am not speaking of cotton, but of meat, butter, and especially eggs. Butter has not shown so much advance, however, and in fact, the wonder is that it is not considerably higher than it is. Best grades retail at about 26@28c. and indeed 25 cents will purchase a good article of creamery. Rolls are worth something like 18 cents and "renovated" about the same. The latter, by the way, seems to enjoy a good degree of popularity, though many claim that it leaves a "dark-brown taste" in the mouth. Eggs have in many instances sold for 50 cents a dozen. Of course the consumption is limited when that figure is reached, but the supply has not been excessive at any time this winter. A few days of warmer weather will alter all this, however.

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It has been a week of liquidation in the cotton market and yesterday there was a loss of twenty-five points, so that middling upland was worth 13.50 against 9.60 last year. The market is unsettled, but the best authorities do not seem to apprehend any further decline, or at least, only a small one. On the Exchange the sales amounted to about 500,000 bales. The exports so far this year show a decline of 80,000 bales from the same time last year.

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Another huge department store will be opened in a couple of months on Fourteenth Street. This is where the old store of R. H. Macy & Co. stood. The new building has been erected by Henry Siegel and adds materially to the "shopping district." Over on Broadway, Wanamaker is putting up a still bigger establishment. This is directly opposite his present store, and from appearances it will be second to none. There is no store here that is recognized as a big mail order concern as are several in Chicago, and, in fact, the situation is not favorable for such concern. The Montgomery-Ward store in Chicago sells some \$15,000,000 a year. There are stores here which equal that amount and which employ 3,500 to 4,500 hands; but their mail-order business of course is limited. The competition is fierce among the big shops, and one with an eye open for "bargains," can always obtain them whether in the line of luxuries or necessities. R. A. D.

New York City, February 20, 1904.

This is the time of year to select garden seed and prepare for the year's supply of vegetables. This is one part of the farm work that no man can afford to neglect. No field crop pays half so well as the home garden. Look over our list of advertisers and send for seed catalogues, and order what you wish. Don't depend on cheap, inferior seed from your merchant or your neighbors, or the disappointing stuff that our Congressmen persist in sending out for political purposes. Get good seed from some reliable advertiser. One dollar for quality at planting time, usually means a hundred dollars in quantity and quality at harvest time.